



# Reconstruction Mechanisms of the Gaza Strip after the 2023 War: A Comparative Analysis Informed by International Experiences

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## Abstract

*The reconstruction of the Gaza Strip after the 2023 war has become a matter of significant concern for many stakeholders, due to the extensive destruction of infrastructure, public facilities, and residential areas. Previous reconstruction efforts have faced major challenges related to governance, financing, and coordination, which underscores the need to adopt mechanisms grounded in evidence and international experience. This study aims to develop conceptual frameworks for reconstruction mechanisms, informed by international experiences, in order to arrive at a comprehensive and effective vision for the reconstruction process.*

*The study employs the descriptive-analytical method and the comparative method to achieve its objectives. The main findings indicate that the reconstruction process in the Gaza Strip requires high-level international and local coordination; that internal division and regional and international polarization impede reconstruction efforts and prevent meaningful progress; and that previous international experiences in reconstruction highlight the importance of leadership, planning, and the exploitation of emerging opportunities, particularly in light of renewed regional and global attention.*

*The most important recommendations include: the need for the Palestinian Authority to establish an independent national reconstruction authority that enjoys political and popular support and is responsible for developing and implementing reconstruction plans; securing international guarantees for financing and implementation to prevent waste of resources and ensure continuity in funding flows; the necessity of benefiting from successful international experiences and adapting them to the local context in the Gaza Strip; and focusing on social and humanitarian dimensions of reconstruction—such as health, education, and housing—alongside economic projects,*

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*to ensure comprehensive and sustainable recovery. The study also recommends enhancing partnership with the Arab Republic of Egypt so that it assumes a pivotal role in leading reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip.*

*Keywords: Governance; Reconstruction; Gaza Strip; 2023 War; International Experiences.*

## **Introduction**

Reconstruction is a fundamental and necessary pillar in the recovery path of societies from the impacts of natural disasters or political conflicts, as it contributes to rebuilding infrastructure, thereby reinforcing stability, development, governance, and the enhancement of economic and social growth, as well as the restoration of normal life. The Gaza Strip is one of the most prominent and severely affected areas globally in this regard, due to the extensive destruction inflicted on infrastructure, vital sectors, and various public facilities. This destruction has made rapid reconstruction an urgent necessity to ensure a dignified life for the population of Gaza.

According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, <https://www.undrr.org/>), reconstruction is defined as the medium- and long-term rebuilding of vital infrastructure, services, housing, facilities, and livelihoods necessary for the full functioning of the local community or disaster-affected community, restoring them with elements of sustainability and resilience and aligning them with the principles of sustainable development and the “build back better” concept, in order to avoid or reduce the severity of future disaster risks.

Accordingly, reconstruction is not limited to restoring what previously existed or rebuilding and rehabilitating damaged infrastructure—such as housing, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, and utility networks—but also includes enhancing the community’s resilience to future shocks. In other words, it encompasses rehabilitating the economy, improving basic services, and strengthening community and economic capacities to achieve development and risk resistance, thus enabling, and enhancing resilience in the face of future crises.

This study seeks to provide a practical forward-looking framework for reconstruction mechanisms in the Gaza Strip, based on a comprehensive reading of the current reality in its various economic and social dimensions, and an analysis of the impacts of the most recent war on the Gaza Strip in 2023, which produced widespread destruction of infrastructure and the social fabric. The research focuses on identifying the real challenges that hinder reconstruction efforts—whether political, institutional, or logistical—alongside examining the available opportunities that can be leveraged.

In addition, the study draws on international experiences in reconstruction by analyzing both successful and faltering models, with the aim of extracting lessons that can be applied in the Palestinian context. The study concludes with a set of findings and practical recommendations that can contribute to laying solid foundations for effective and comprehensive reconstruction that restores hope to the residents of the Gaza Strip and paves the way for sustainable economic and social development.

## Theoretical Framework and Review of Previous Studies

### The Current Reality of the Gaza Strip

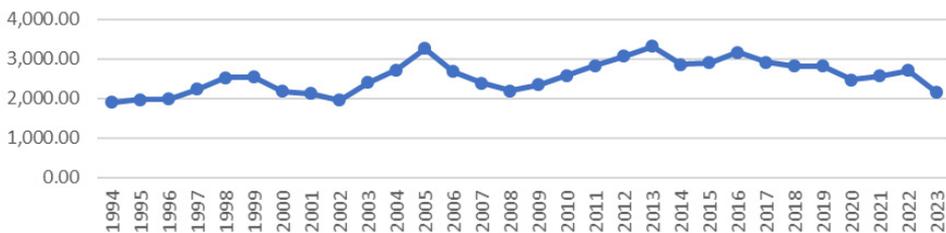
#### *Overview of the Economic and Social Situation*

The Gaza Strip faces multiple complex challenges at the economic and social levels due to the ongoing blockade, recurrent conflicts, and unstable political conditions. Israel imposed a comprehensive and systematic blockade on the Gaza Strip in 2007, and the Strip has been subjected to numerous destructive Israeli military operations, which have negatively affected all aspects of life. To understand Gaza's reality and diagnose its main challenges, the following is an analysis of key economic and social indicators:

#### 1- **Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and GDP Per Capita**

The value of real GDP in the Gaza Strip for 2023 at constant 2015 prices decreased by 22.5% compared to 2022 (Palestine Monetary Authority, 2024). Consequently, real GDP in Palestine in 2023 at constant 2015 prices amounted to about 14,923 million US dollars, registering a decrease of 5% compared to the previous year (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024). This decline is attributable to a deterioration in all economic indicators during the fourth quarter of 2023 as a result of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, which affected all indicators of the Palestinian economy, including the labor market, public finance, price levels, and trade, as well as the suspension of clearance revenue transfers and the government's inability to pay full salaries to public employees. These factors contributed to a decline in citizens' purchasing power and a slowdown in economic activity (Palestine Monetary Authority, 2024).

The authors note that Israeli attacks led to the shutdown of most economic activities, as Gaza's GDP in the last quarter of 2023 decreased by about 81.3% compared to the same period in the previous year (Palestine Monetary Authority, 2024). These developments caused a sharp decline in per capita GDP in the Gaza Strip in 2023 by about 24.3%, reaching approximately 947.6 US dollars during that period (Palestine Monetary Authority, 2024).



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Cumulative Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>

**Figure (1): Real GDP in the Gaza Strip during the Period 1994-2023  
(Constant 2015 Prices, Million USD)**

Figure (1) shows that Gaza's GDP during 1994–2023 experienced considerable fluctuations and was affected by several factors, most notably the blockade, military conflicts, and changes in external financial support. The figure indicates that the highest

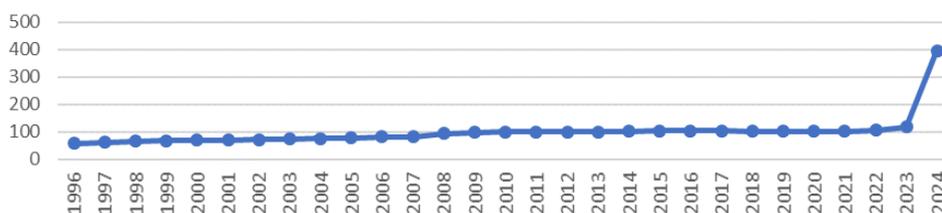
GDP value was recorded in 2013, while the lowest value was in 2023. In 2013, Gaza's GDP reached 3,320.50 million US dollars, the highest within the 1994–2023 period. This increase is attributable to higher external investments and international aid. In 2012, the State of Qatar provided support worth 407 million US dollars to the Gaza Strip, allocated to reconstruction and infrastructure projects, which helped stimulate the local economy and support various productive sectors (Gaza Reconstruction Committee, <https://q-grc.ps/grants>).

In 2023, by contrast, the Gaza Strip experienced a sharp decline in GDP to 2,154.70 million US dollars, the lowest level in the period 1994–2023. This decline is due to the Israeli war on Gaza in 2023, during which military operations destroyed infrastructure and public facilities, causing a near-total halt in production and directly affecting all economic sectors. As a result, unemployment rates rose to unprecedented levels. According to the International Labour Organization, unemployment reached 80%, and Gaza's GDP contracted by 83.5%, the largest recorded economic loss for the Strip (International Labour Organization, ilo.org).

The authors add that large fluctuations in GDP can be attributed to the recurrent wars in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023, which disrupted the local economy and destroyed infrastructure, and to Israeli restrictions on the movement of goods and people since 2007, which have constrained economic activity and significantly affected the capacity of productive sectors to generate economic growth.

## 2- Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The Consumer Price Index in the Gaza Strip is an important economic indicator that reflects changes in the price levels of goods and services consumed by individuals and households. This index has shown noticeable fluctuations in recent years due to economic and political factors.



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Cumulative Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>

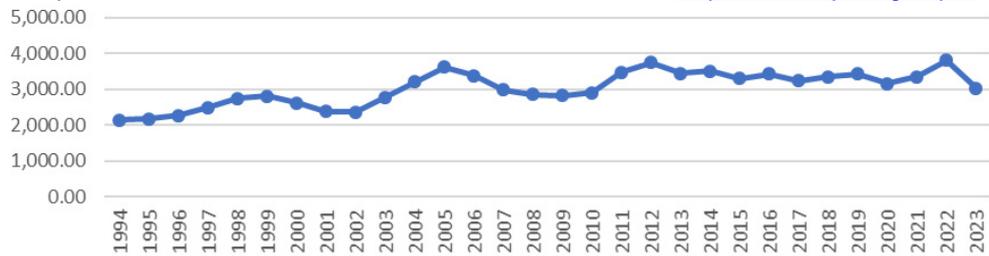
**Figure (2): Consumer Price Index in the Gaza Strip during the Period 1996-2024**

Figure (2) indicates that the CPI increased in most years, registering a rise of 102.5% in 2023 compared to 1996. This increase is largely due to the imposed blockade, military operations, and political instability, which affect the availability of goods and the costs of transportation and storage, all of which are reflected in the CPI. External factors such as global commodity price changes and exchange rate fluctuations also influence the CPI in Gaza.

The notable feature is the sharp increase in 2024, when the CPI rose by 238% compared to 2023. The authors attribute this surge to higher shipping costs, coordination costs related to the entry and transport of goods, economic uncertainty, and severe shortages of available goods, which drove up prices. Agricultural products in particular witnessed steep price increases due to higher input costs and the significant risks faced by farmers.

### 3- Final Consumption

Final consumption in the Gaza Strip is strongly influenced by economic and political conditions. Consumption tends to rise during periods of relative stability and the availability of external support, while it falls sharply during economic crises and Israeli wars. According to Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics data, final consumption in the first three quarters of 2024 amounted to approximately 156.4, 156.6, and 166.6 million US dollars, respectively, representing declines of 83.1%, 83.2%, and 83.1% compared to 2023 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>).



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Cumulative Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>

**Figure (3): Final Consumption in the Gaza Strip during the Period 1994-2023 (Million USD)**

Figure (3) shows fluctuations in final consumption in Gaza over the years. Some years witnessed marked increases, while others saw substantial declines. During 2006–2007, consumption decreased due to the Palestinian political division and the Israeli blockade. By contrast, 2011–2012 witnessed a rise in consumption as a result of increased flows of goods and humanitarian aid through commercial tunnels with Egypt. In 2023, final consumption fell due to the repercussions of the Israeli war on Gaza, which reduced economic activity, raised unemployment rates, and increased prices, alongside a change in the composition of consumers' food baskets—all of which negatively affected final consumption.

### 4- Investment

Gross fixed capital formation is a vital indicator for understanding investment dynamics and economic growth in any country, as it reflects the extent of expansion in fixed assets and the economy's capacity to enhance productivity and competitiveness. During the study period, the Gaza Strip experienced multiple fluctuations that affected the volume of investment.



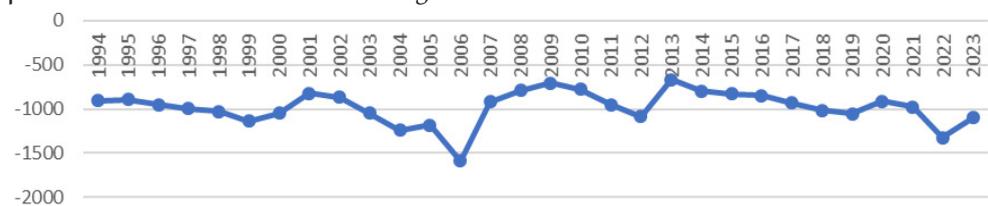
Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Cumulative Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>

**Figure (4): Gross Fixed Capital Formation in the Gaza Strip during the Period 1994–2023 (Million USD)**

Figure (4) demonstrates that several years witnessed declines in gross fixed capital formation, most notably during the Second Intifada (2000–2002). In 2006, however, gross fixed capital formation reached its peak, supported by an increase in development and investment projects, which boosted economic growth. In 2007, Israeli-imposed restrictions on the flow of raw materials and equipment due to the blockade constrained industrial development and investment. Subsequently, the years 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023 were marked by Israeli wars and military assaults and by trade restrictions that destroyed facilities and infrastructure and reduced and undermined investments. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020 led to economic stagnation and reduced investment.

## 5- Trade Balance

The trade balance is a core indicator of the state of external trade, representing the difference between the value of exports and imports. In the Gaza Strip, the trade balance is affected by several factors, most notably the blockade imposed since 2007, political constraints, and local and global economic fluctuations.



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Cumulative Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>

**Figure (5): Trade Balance of the Gaza Strip during the Period 1994–2023 (Million USD)**

Figure (5) shows that between 1994 and 1999, the Oslo Accords helped enhance trade with external markets. Nonetheless, the trade deficit persisted due to Gaza's heavy dependence on imports and insufficient domestic production for export. Thereafter, the trade balance collapsed due to the blockade and restrictions, particularly during the Intifada and following the imposition of the blockade in 2007, which included bans on the export of agricultural and industrial goods. This led to declines in both imports and exports and a near-paralysis of the trade balance.

The trade balance registered some improvement in the level of exports when partial and limited openings of crossings occurred. However, export performance

remained weak due to Israeli restrictions. Growing economic crises and higher import costs reduced purchasing power and, consequently, import volumes. Finally, the security instability of 2023 and the destruction of most productive capacity significantly reduced trade with external markets.

## 6- Unemployment Rate

Unemployment in the Gaza Strip is one of the greatest challenges facing its society. The unemployment rate reflects the impact of the imposed blockade and recurrent conflicts on the labor force. The Strip suffers from some of the highest unemployment rates in the world. In 2024, unemployment rose to nearly 80% due to economic collapse following the most recent conflict between Israel and Hamas, which pushed about 2.3 million residents of Gaza into poverty (Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com>). The blockade, restrictions on the movement of people and goods, reduced economic activity, and destruction of infrastructure due to repeated wars have all contributed to this situation. The problem has intensified in recent years as a result of political and economic crises, exacerbating poverty and deteriorating living standards (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024).



Source: Palestine Monetary Authority, Annual Data, <https://www.pma.ps/ar/>

**Figure (6): Unemployment Rate in the Gaza Strip during the Period 1995–2024**

Figure (6) shows that Gaza has experienced sharp fluctuations in unemployment rates over the past three decades, influenced by multiple political and economic factors. The unemployment rate declined from 29.4% in 1995 to 16.9% in 1999, due to a relative improvement in economic conditions following the Oslo Accords and an increase in job opportunities. However, it rose to 18.9% in 2000 with the outbreak of the Second Intifada, which led to deteriorating economic conditions and reached 38.1% in 2002 due to repeated closures and infrastructure destruction.

Unemployment increased to 34.8% in 2006 and 29.7% in 2007 amid the imposition of the blockade and restrictions on the movement of people and goods. It rose further to 40.5% in 2008 with the onset of military operations and further infrastructure destruction. Unemployment peaked at 43.9% in 2014 due to the war and its devastating impact on the local economy. During 2015–2019, unemployment ranged between 41.1% and 45.2% with the continued blockade and deteriorating living conditions. The rate continued to increase, reaching 46.9% in 2021 amid the effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic, and remained at about 45.8% in 2023, before surging to around 80% as a result of the latest war on the Gaza Strip.

In light of the above, the authors affirm that the Gaza Strip is at the epicenter of economic and humanitarian crises and suffers from numerous problems that have been exacerbated by Israeli wars and the ongoing blockade. This situation exposes Gaza to major challenges that require urgent intervention to enable reconstruction and improve the economic situation.

### ***The Impact of the Israeli War on the Gaza Strip***

Since 7 October 2023, the Gaza Strip has been experiencing an unprecedented Israeli war that has had catastrophic effects on various economic, social, and humanitarian dimensions and beyond. The war has caused massive human and material losses, resulting in economic, social, and environmental collapse and further deterioration of conditions in Gaza.

#### **1- Economic Impacts**

##### **A- Destruction of Economic Infrastructure**

The Israeli war has caused extensive destruction of infrastructure, including roads, electricity networks, water networks, sewage systems, and others, leading to an almost complete paralysis in vital economic sectors. According to preliminary estimates, from 7 October 2023 until the end of January 2024, damage to infrastructure reached approximately 29.9 billion US dollars (UN Geneva, 2025). The authors emphasize that this implies that reconstruction may require many years and that the massive destruction of basic infrastructure will hinder economic growth, impede social development, and increase unemployment and poverty levels.

##### **B- Economic Growth Decline**

The widespread destruction of economic facilities led to a sharp decline in industrial and agricultural production, which in turn affected GDP. According to UNCTAD, in the fourth quarter of 2023 Gaza experienced its deepest economic recession. GDP contracted by 80.8% compared to the third quarter of 2023, while GDP per capita decreased by 81.4% during the same period (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2024: 9). The authors note that such a contraction in GDP has significantly depressed economic growth rates.

##### **C- Rising Unemployment and Poverty**

The Israeli war led to the closure of many factories, companies, and economic establishments, resulting in thousands of Palestinians losing their jobs. Accordingly, the Gaza Strip suffers from extremely high unemployment rates, with around 80% of Gaza's workers unemployed since the beginning of the war (World Bank, 2023: 2). Findings indicate that the poverty rate rose to more than 74.3% in 2024, up from 38.8% at the end of 2023 (ESCWA, 2024: 11).

**D- Rising Prices and Inflation**

The Israeli blockade and the extensive destruction of commercial markets and warehouses led to a rise in prices of basic commodities. The Consumer Price Index in 2024 increased by 238% compared to 2023, the highest jump in years. The authors add that this surge has severely undermined citizens' purchasing power and prevented a large proportion of Gaza's population from obtaining basic commodities, when available at all (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>).

**E- Destruction of Economic Sectors and its Impact on Productivity**

The recent Israeli war caused severe destruction to various economic sectors, adversely affecting productivity and infrastructure. In the education sector, institutions suffered substantial losses, with many schools, universities, colleges, and kindergartens destroyed. There were also casualties and injuries among students and teachers, leading to a complete disruption of the educational process. Experts have described the Israeli actions as a systematic attempt to destroy the entire Palestinian education system. As of 25 September 2024, some 625,000 students were unable to access education. More than 10,317 students and 416 education staff had been killed, and over 19,119 students and 2,463 teachers injured. By 31 July 2024, 92.9% of schools (524 schools) had been damaged and required partial or complete reconstruction, and more than 53.5% of schools used as shelters had been directly targeted (United Nations Development Programme, 2024: 5-6).

The authors stress that such destruction of educational infrastructure and the loss of human capital in the education sector represent a grave and direct threat to future generations. In the health sector, the system is on the verge of complete collapse. The World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that 94% of hospitals in Gaza have been damaged or completely destroyed. In addition, the closure of crossings by the Israeli occupation and the obstruction of the entry of medicines and medical supplies-along with severe restrictions on their type and quantity-have led to acute shortages in essential health services (Reuters, 2025).

Reports indicate that, as of 25 September 2024, more than 986 health workers in Gaza had been killed, and 310 medical staff had been arrested by the Israeli army as of 30 June 2024. By 22 July 2024, WHO had documented 492 attacks on health facilities, affecting 109 facilities, including 32 hospitals, and 114 ambulances. Communicable diseases are expected to become a major cause of excess mortality in Gaza, even in the event of a permanent ceasefire in the near future. Major threats include diseases such as cholera, measles, polio, and meningitis. Moreover, severe shortages of clean water and sanitation facilities compound health risks. Restrictions on the entry of medical aid have exacerbated the crisis, with 60% of medicines either completely unavailable or only available in very limited quantities (United Nations Development Programme, 2024: 6-7). The authors add that this situation not only indicates an acute humanitarian crisis but also represents a fundamental challenge for any future health-sector reconstruction.

The construction sector has also experienced near-total collapse due to extensive destruction of infrastructure and residential and commercial buildings. According to estimates by the World Bank and the United Nations, damage to vital infrastructure in Gaza reached around 18.5 billion US dollars by the end of January 2024, equivalent to 97% of the combined GDP of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022 (World Bank, 2024). The authors emphasize that such extensive damage to infrastructure and buildings has brought the construction sector to a near standstill and will require substantial resources for reconstruction.

The services sector has also deteriorated sharply, with value added declining by 76%, including key services such as education, health, transportation, communications, and public utilities, which were severely disrupted due to destruction and restrictions. Service-sector infrastructure suffered massive damage: 92% of main roads were destroyed or disabled, and electricity and telecommunications networks deteriorated markedly (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2024). The authors highlight that this deterioration in the services sector reflects a major humanitarian disaster, as the impact extended beyond the disruption of economic activity to impede access to basic needs such as electricity, water, and communications.

## **2- Non-Economic Impacts**

### **A- Humanitarian Impact**

The war has caused the displacement of more than 1.9 million Palestinians from their homes under coercive conditions, representing about 90% of the population (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 2025). Residential neighborhoods, shelters, and health and educational facilities have been targeted (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024). Living conditions have deteriorated further as a result of complete power cuts and water shortages, as well as acute shortages of food and medicine and restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid. This situation has increased dependence on external assistance, which is often irregular or insufficient to meet the basic needs of the population (World Bank, 2025).

### **B- Psychological and Social Impact**

The war has produced profound psychological effects across all population groups, particularly children, who have experienced trauma resulting from the loss of relatives, destruction of their homes, and repeated exposure to violence. United Nations reports have indicated rising levels of depression among the population, especially women and children, alongside a shortage of psychological and social support services (United Nations Children's Fund, 2024).

### **C- Environmental Impact**

The war has also had severe negative impacts on the environment. Intensive airstrikes and the destruction of facilities have led to the leakage of pollutants into

groundwater and rising air pollution due to explosions and the use of various weapons. The destruction of sewage and waste management systems has further degraded environmental conditions, causing the spread of numerous diseases and epidemics, amid concerns that they will be difficult to control given the collapse of the health system (United Nations Environment Programme, 2024).

The authors affirm that the most recent war on the Gaza Strip has brought the Palestinian issue back to the forefront of regional and international agendas. There is an urgent need to end the conflict, provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the Strip, and ensure rapid international intervention to rebuild infrastructure, improve food security, and enhance economic and social stability.

## **Challenges Facing Reconstruction**

The reconstruction of Gaza following the latest Israeli war in 2023 is an extremely complex undertaking, confronted by numerous challenges at different levels. The most salient of these challenges are:

### ***Economic Challenges***

The war inflicted enormous economic losses that go far beyond the destruction of infrastructure and vital facilities. According to a joint World Bank–United Nations report (2024), severe damage has affected electricity networks and roads, along with widespread destruction of educational and health facilities. The war also caused a severe contraction in GDP and a decline in the productive capacity of the industrial and agricultural sectors, thereby increasing unemployment and poverty rates, especially under the continuing blockade that restricts trade and prevents the entry of essential reconstruction materials (World Bank & UN, 2024).

### ***Social Challenges***

The main social challenges include mass displacement and the forced uprooting of hundreds of thousands of families, as well as deteriorating living conditions and the absence of basic services. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 75% of Gaza's population is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance amid acute shortages of food, water, and shelter. The war has also left deep psychological scars, especially among children and women, due to the loss of loved ones, destruction of homes, and repeated exposure to violence, which has heightened the need for psychosocial support services. Moreover, the deterioration of the educational and health systems has widened social gaps and increased the vulnerability of society, hampering long-term recovery and development (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2025).

### ***Political Challenges***

Political challenges are among the most significant obstacles to reconstruction efforts. These include internal political divisions among Palestinian factions and the

absence of a national consensus on managing the reconstruction file. The complexity of the regional and international political context, the persistence of occupation, and Israeli control over border crossings and resources all act to slow reconstruction, restrict the movement of materials, and impede aid flows (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2024). In addition, fluctuating international positions and donor conditionalities affect the pace of project implementation, further complicating the situation and prolonging the recovery period (United Nations Children's Fund, 2025).

## **Opportunities and Lessons Learned from International Experiences**

### ***Opportunities for Reconstruction on the Gaza Strip***

Despite the massive destruction caused by the 2023 Israeli war on the Gaza Strip and the immense challenges facing reconstruction, there are several promising opportunities that can form an effective entry point for sustainable and comprehensive reconstruction.

First among these is increasing international attention. Many states and donor entities have expressed a willingness to support reconstruction efforts through financial contributions and technical assistance (World Bank, 2024). This creates important opportunities to strengthen international and regional partnerships, particularly in light of growing global awareness of the importance of stability in the region. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) assessment of the war's impact on Egypt emphasizes that the conflict has affected Egypt, and that stability in Gaza has direct implications for neighboring countries. This underscores the need for regional integration in supporting reconstruction efforts (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

In this context, Egypt has emerged as a pivotal regional actor through its reconstruction initiative. In 2024, the Egyptian government launched a national plan for Gaza's reconstruction, clearly demonstrating its desire to play a central role in coordinating Arab and international efforts and avoiding the repetition of mistakes that marred earlier plans (Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). For its part, UNCTAD has stressed the importance of capitalizing on the current wave of international support for the Palestinian economy, provided that transparent and credible mechanisms are put in place to build trust between donors and local authorities (United Nations Conference on Trade & Development, 2024).

The domestic and international private sectors also represent a significant opportunity to contribute to reconstruction, particularly in infrastructure, technology, and renewable energy. UNDP estimates that smart investments in productive sectors can strengthen prospects for economic recovery and generate jobs within a relatively short time frame (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

Local human capital, despite facing severe challenges, remains another important asset that can be harnessed in planning and implementation processes,

thereby reducing complete dependence on external support. Digital transformation further presents a key opportunity, given the growth of the technology sector despite the blockade. Digital tools can be leveraged to develop sectors such as education, health, and public services (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Small enterprises and entrepreneurship-which have demonstrated resilience during times of crisis-can also serve as effective engines for local economic recovery, especially if supported by appropriate legal frameworks and adequate financing (United Nations Conference on Trade & Development, 2024).

### ***International Reconstruction Models***

Despite the substantial challenges that accompany reconstruction after wars, the world has witnessed both successful and unsuccessful experiences from which Gaza can draw useful lessons in developing a practical vision for its own reconstruction.

#### **1- Successful International Models**

##### **A- Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Following the Dayton Agreement in 1995, reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina began with broad international support. The country adopted a reconstruction plan with assistance from the World Bank and the European Union, through which more than 5 billion US dollars were injected in the early years. Efforts focused on rebuilding infrastructure and public institutions. Within just five years, Bosnia succeeded in restoring power, water, education, and health networks. Despite political and ethnic challenges, the country gradually achieved stability, repatriated part of its displaced population, and recorded notable economic growth (World Bank, 2004). The authors stress that centralized decision-making and institutional planning were crucial in the relative success of this experience.

##### **B- Lebanon (Post-Civil War)**

Lebanon underwent an active reconstruction phase in the 1990s under Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, with the "Horizon of Beirut" program focusing on rebuilding the downtown area and attracting investments. Despite mounting debt, the Lebanese model is seen as an example of rapid mobilization of domestic and international resources (Makdisi & El-Khoury, 2002).

After the 2006 Israeli war, the southern suburbs of Beirut and parts of the infrastructure were devastated. Qatar played a particularly notable role, undertaking the reconstruction of more than 12,000 housing units through the "Waad" project. This experience was commended for its speed of implementation and for direct coordination with residents, bypassing cumbersome bureaucracy (UN-Habitat, 2007). The authors note that Qatar did not wait for complex bureaucratic procedures but coordinated directly with local implementing entities, thereby shortening timelines and enhancing community trust.

### C- **Germany after World War II**

The Marshall Plan (1948) laid the foundation for the reconstruction of Western Europe and Germany in particular, with around 13 billion US dollars in funding. Success, however, was not due to financing alone: it also depended on economic and institutional reforms adopted by western Germany, as the political leadership implemented deep economic reforms that rapidly revived production and focused on local industries (Eichengreen, 1996).

### D- **Japan after the 1945 Nuclear Bombings**

Despite the catastrophic devastation caused by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan was able to recover within less than a decade. It focused first on human development through educational reform, administrative modernization, and the promotion of technological industries. With relatively limited external assistance but smart domestic policies, Japan emerged as a major economic power within a short period (Dower, 1999).

### E- **Ukraine**

Since the outbreak of the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2022, the Ukrainian capital Kyiv has been planning for reconstruction even amid ongoing conflict. The distinctive features of the Ukrainian experience include early planning, close partnerships with international institutions, and a focus on digital and green reconstruction. Ukraine adopted transparent financing mechanisms and launched a “Digital Reconstruction Platform” that allows tracking of funds and implementing entities (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). The authors view this experience as highlighting the importance of anticipating the post-war phase through institutional preparation and the use of technology.

## 2- **Models that Failed to Achieve Effective Reconstruction**

### A- **Iraq (After the 2003 US Invasion)**

Despite the injection of billions of dollars, Iraq’s reconstruction efforts were hampered by corruption, insecurity, and poor governance. World Bank reports indicate that around 25% of funded projects were not completed or failed to achieve their objectives, and public trust in institutions declined (World Bank, 2018). The authors concur that the absence of security and political consensus, the multiplicity of controlling actors and religious authorities, and the lack of coordination between domestic and international stakeholders led to wasted opportunities, despite the availability of funding.

### B- **Libya After 2011**

Following the fall of the former regime, Libya possessed substantial financial resources and sovereign funds. However, the absence of functioning institutions, political fragmentation, and the influence of armed factions led to stalled reconstruction

efforts. Despite some international initiatives to rehabilitate infrastructure, outcomes remained limited. Certain municipalities, such as Misrata, managed to implement local reconstruction initiatives through civil councils and support from the diaspora. While these initiatives were not centrally coordinated, they provided small-scale examples of communities' capacity for self-recovery (UN-Habitat, 2021). Still, World Bank reports indicate that the ongoing political crisis hindered more than 80% of planned projects, including those in health, water, and energy (World Bank, 2022). Based on this, the authors stress that the absence of good governance, insufficient capacity and expertise among local companies, and the lack of national consensus can derail reconstruction even when funding is available.

### ***Lessons Learned from International Reconstruction Experiences***

International reconstruction experiences—both successful and faltering—demonstrate that success does not depend solely on the volume of financing or the level of international support, but more fundamentally on a set of core factors that recur across different contexts. A review of these experiences reveals patterns from which lessons applicable to the Palestinian case can be drawn, most notably:

#### **1- Centralized Decision-Making and Clear National Reference**

Successful models such as Bosnia, Japan, and Germany show that the presence of a clear central authority and a unified political leadership with a coherent vision is a critical factor in directing and coordinating efforts. In Bosnia, despite ethnic tensions, international support was channeled to a central authority with a comprehensive plan, enabling effective coordination and oversight. By contrast, the Iraqi and Libyan experiences reveal that multiple power centers and the absence of a clear decision-making hub led to fragmented efforts, difficulty in trust-building among stakeholders, and the loss of institutional direction.

#### **2- The Interdependence of Financing and Reform**

Comparing the Marshall Plan in Germany to post-2003 Iraq highlights that funding alone is insufficient. In Germany, financial aid was accompanied by deep economic reforms and rational economic policies that enabled rapid revival of domestic production. Iraq, on the other hand, lacked a robust governance framework, which left financial resources vulnerable to waste and corruption.

#### **3- Bureaucracy versus Flexibility**

Qatar's "Waad" project in southern Lebanon after 2006 presented an alternative model that circumvented formal bureaucracy and engaged directly with local communities. This approach allowed for rapid implementation and restored trust in reconstruction actors. The experience underscores the importance of "implementation flexibility" in post-war contexts, where delays can be costly and societal trust is fragile.

#### 4- **Balancing Centralization and Local Initiatives**

Although the Libyan state failed to manage reconstruction effectively at the national level, local initiatives in cities such as Misrata demonstrated the potential of civil society and diaspora-supported efforts. While such localized initiatives do not have the capacity to drive comprehensive transformation, they highlight the value of community-level resilience, which should be integrated into national reconstruction frameworks rather than left fragmented.

#### 5- **Administrative Reform and Human Development before Infrastructure**

Japan's experience offers a unique approach in which reconstruction began with people rather than physical structures. By prioritizing educational reform and public administration, Japan laid solid foundations for sustainable development. This is particularly relevant for Palestine, where physical rebuilding may be insufficient unless accompanied by reforms to the educational, administrative, and economic systems.

#### 6- **Transparency as a Lever for Trust and Accountability**

Ukraine adopted a technology-based, transparent approach through its "Digital Reconstruction Platform," which strengthened donor and partner confidence and reduced opportunities for corruption. This demonstrates that in politically charged international environments, reconstruction must be anchored in robust accountability mechanisms. The Palestinian context often lacks such mechanisms due to weak oversight and institutional politicization.

#### 7- **National Decision-Making Autonomy**

The experiences of Germany and Japan show that national ownership of decision-making is essential for successful reconstruction, in contrast to cases such as Iraq, where foreign powers' competing agendas conflicted with local interests. Autonomy does not mean isolation, but rather the ability to define national priorities based on a domestic vision rather than external agendas.

These lessons provide an important knowledge base for designing realistic, effective reconstruction scenarios for the Gaza Strip. Success hinges not only on obtaining funding but also on wise management, flexible planning, and unified national leadership that understands where to begin and how best to draw on others' experiences. At the same time, experiences cannot simply be transplanted; each country's context is unique. Thus, the authors argue that meaningful learning for Gaza requires a critical reading of these experiences and their adaptation to Palestinian conditions through the following:

- The Ukrainian experience shows that planning can begin even during crises. Gaza can adopt a similar approach by initiating reconstruction planning now, without waiting for a complete ceasefire or an official international plan. Establishing accurate databases, identifying priorities, and forming specialized working groups can all begin during temporary lulls in fighting.

- The Qatari experience in Lebanon demonstrates that flexible implementation and avoiding bureaucratic complexities can make a significant difference. In Gaza, given the existence of a strong network of community initiatives and civil society organizations, this model can be leveraged by granting local communities a direct implementation role rather than limiting them to being aid recipients.
- Japan's experience confirms that human development must precede physical reconstruction, which is now an urgent priority for Gaza. Improving education, providing mental health care, empowering youth, and women, restoring a sense of dignity, and proactively integrating war-related persons with disabilities as active contributors to society and the economy are all as important as rebuilding physical structures. Reconstruction without human development remains incomplete.
- Less successful experiences such as Iraq and Libya highlight the fundamental risks of political fragmentation and poor governance. In Gaza, political division cannot be separated from any reconstruction path. Successful reconstruction requires at least a minimum level of coordination and integration among various actors-official, civil, local, and international-under the umbrella of the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The authors stress that financing is not the only challenge. While international financial support is indeed needed, there is a greater need for national will, a comprehensive vision, and investment in local capacities. Gaza possesses immense human resources and accumulated experience in crisis management, which constitute an opportunity that should be fully utilized.

### **Comparative Analysis of Lessons from International Reconstruction Experiences**

Comparison among international experiences confirms that successful reconstruction is not primarily determined by the volume of funding, but by the quality of institutional governance that accompanies reconstruction efforts. Experiences that relied on independent central bodies (such as Bosnia and Japan) succeeded in achieving balanced and sustainable reconstruction, while those characterized by a multiplicity of actors and overlapping authorities (such as Iraq and Lebanon) faced clear failures despite adequate funding.

It is also evident that sustainable reconstruction requires a long-term national plan, transparency in resource management, organized community participation, integration of reconstruction with economic development plans, and the avoidance of politicization and conditional funding. Table (1) provides a comparative analysis of international reconstruction experiences and the lessons applicable to Gaza:

**Table (1): Comparative Analysis of International Reconstruction Experiences and Lessons for the Gaza Strip**

Country / Experience	Influencing Factors	Governance Mechanisms	Key Challenges	Lessons that Can Be Applied in Gaza
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Strong international support; unified national plan; focus on infrastructure; gradual stabilization	Clear central authority; institutional coordination with international actors	Ethnic and political divisions	Importance of centralized decision-making, a comprehensive national plan, and institutional coordination with donors
Lebanon (Post-Civil War)	Attraction of investments; government initiatives; international support	Unstable governance; high bureaucracy; heavy political dependence on the state	Debt, corruption, political polarization	Need to reduce bureaucracy; separate reconstruction from politics; use flexible implementation mechanisms
Lebanon 2006 / Qatar (Waad Project)	Rapid implementation; clearly earmarked funding; direct coordination with communities	Non-bureaucratic model; direct management between donor and beneficiaries	Politicization of reconstruction; limited scope beyond the south	Potential to adopt flexible, community-based implementation mechanisms in Gaza
Germany after World War II	International funding; economic reforms; strong political leadership	Strong institutions; strict economic framework; clear oversight	Widespread destruction; shortage of domestic resources	Linking reconstruction to structural economic reform rather than physical rebuilding alone
Japan after the 1945 Nuclear Bombings	Human development; educational reform; administrative modernization; industrial growth	Efficient institutions; human development policies; long-term orientation	Limited resources; consequences of nuclear devastation	Prioritizing human development (education, living standards, health)
Ukraine	Early planning; partnerships; digital and green reconstruction; high transparency	Unified digital platform; transparent financing; strict oversight	Ongoing war; heavy reliance on external funding	Importance of early planning before war ends and adoption of a transparent digital platform
Iraq after the 2003 US Invasion	Corruption; insecurity; multiple power centers; mismanagement	Lack of unified leadership; overlapping authorities; weak institutions	Insecurity; external interference; loss of trust	Dangers of multiple actors; need for unified governance and strict financial oversight
Libya after 2011	Political division; proliferation of factions; weak state	Absence of effective institutions; independent local initiatives	Internal conflict; insecurity; state collapse	Importance of national consensus; need for state institutions; value of organized local initiatives

The authors conclude that successful experiences were built on three main pillars: (1) unified governance through a strong central body to lead reconstruction (Germany, Bosnia, Japan); (2) effective institutions and transparent oversight mechanisms that reduce waste and ensure fair distribution of funding (Ukraine, Japan); and (3) linking reconstruction to economic and developmental reforms rather than limiting it to physical rebuilding (Germany, Japan).

By contrast, unsuccessful experiences show that a multiplicity of governing entities almost invariably leads to reconstruction failure (Iraq, Libya); political fragmentation immobilizes state capacity (Lebanon, Libya); and the absence of security or administrative stability renders funding inadequate regardless of its volume (Iraq).

Accordingly, Gaza can benefit from these lessons by establishing an independent reconstruction governance body, ensuring digital transparency in funding and project implementation, adopting a long-term reconstruction plan linked to development, and avoiding politicization and competing authorities in the reconstruction process.

## Review of Previous Studies

Numerous studies have addressed the state of the Gaza Strip's economy after 7 October 2023. Most have focused on assessing damage to specific sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure, in addition to analyzing the challenges facing reconstruction, including the blockade and economic restrictions. The most important of these studies include:

**Abdel-Hay (2025)**, which examined political and economic challenges confronting reconstruction efforts in Gaza after the most recent war. The study noted that 69% of infrastructure had been destroyed and estimated that reconstruction might extend until 2040. It warned against the use of international aid as a political pressure tool on Palestinian resistance.

**Al-Atrush (2025)**, which reviewed the enormous challenges facing reconstruction in Gaza, noting that debris removal alone may take more than 14 years and that total reconstruction costs might reach 80 billion US dollars.

**Beaumont (2025)**, which proposed adopting a Marshall Plan-type model for Gaza's reconstruction and stressed the need for strong international political will and effective coordination among donors.

**United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2025)**, which issued a report highlighting the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza after the war, including widespread infrastructure damage and mass displacement. The report discussed challenges related to the provision of humanitarian assistance and essential services such as shelter, food, and healthcare, and emphasized the urgent need for immediate reconstruction support.

**Reuters (2025)**, which reported that reconstruction costs in Gaza and the West Bank were estimated at more than 50 billion US dollars, with 20 billion needed in the first three years.

**United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2024)**, which presented a preliminary assessment of the economic impact of destruction in Gaza and noted the need for substantial international support for reconstruction. The report detailed damage to infrastructure, domestic production, and markets, as well as reduced productivity across sectors. It also discussed opportunities for economic recovery and provided policy recommendations to stimulate growth.

**World Bank (2025)**, which estimated that rebuilding Gaza after the latest war would require more than 50 billion US dollars. The report documented extensive damage

to vital infrastructure such as schools and hospitals and stressed the need for international cooperation to support reconstruction. It highlighted the importance of improving basic services such as water and sanitation, strengthening the local economy, and creating job opportunities, with a focus on affected sectors such as agriculture and industry.

## **Research Gap**

Despite the multiplicity of studies addressing Gaza's reconstruction, most have focused on documenting war-related damage or cataloguing immediate needs without delving deeply into the broader context and newly emerging challenges-especially after the latest Israeli war in 2023. Many of these studies have also failed to systematically incorporate lessons from other countries' reconstruction experiences, whether successful or unsuccessful.

This study seeks to fill that gap by shedding light on Gaza's current economic and social reality, analyzing core challenges, and examining a range of international models. It derives comparative lessons that can later inform the development of a comprehensive and well-grounded vision for reconstruction in the Gaza Strip.

## **Research Problem**

The Gaza Strip has been enduring an ongoing Israeli war since 7 October 2023, which has caused extensive and severe destruction of infrastructure, public facilities, and vital sectors, and led to unprecedented deterioration in economic and social indicators. According to a joint World Bank–United Nations–European Union report (2025), physical damage in the Gaza Strip was estimated at around 30 billion US dollars, while economic losses due to reduced output and foregone revenue reached about 19 billion US dollars. The health and education sectors were identified as the most severely affected, and the report confirmed that Gaza's economy contracted by 83% in 2024 (World Bank, 2025).

Despite domestic and international efforts to prepare for reconstruction, these efforts remain insufficient and lack a clear, long-term vision, particularly given the continuation of hostilities and the complexity of the political and humanitarian landscape. The absence of a realistic and implementable forward-looking vision for Gaza's reconstruction-one that accounts for the distinctive features of this ongoing war and balances between urgent, emergency interventions and long-term developmental planning-further aggravates the situation. Under these circumstances, reconstruction is no longer merely a response to physical destruction; it has become a prerequisite for survival and for strengthening the resilience of the population.

The research problem thus stems from the lack of an integrated strategic vision for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip under the continuing Israeli assault, one that accounts for multi-dimensional challenges and draws on adaptable international models and experiences.

Accordingly, the study's main research question is:

*What are the possible future scenarios for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip under the ongoing Israeli aggression, and what practical mechanisms can be adopted to implement comprehensive and effective reconstruction inspired by successful international experiences and capable of overcoming current political, economic, and humanitarian challenges?*

## Research Objective

This study aims to propose a practical, forward-looking framework for reconstruction mechanisms in the Gaza Strip in light of the widespread destruction caused by the latest Israeli war. To this end, it analyzes the current situation and assesses the impacts of war on various economic and social sectors, identifies key challenges to reconstruction, and examines comparative international models and experiences. It then extracts lessons that can support effective and sustainable reconstruction, respond to the needs of Gaza's population, and strengthen their resilience.

## Research Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that the application of a governance model informed by lessons from international reconstruction experiences will improve the effectiveness of reconstruction in Gaza in terms of institutional coordination, financial control, and implementation speed, compared to traditional, uncoordinated approaches.

## Significance of the Study

The importance of this study stems from the difficult conditions in the Gaza Strip caused by the latest Israeli war, which has had catastrophic impacts on all aspects of life, particularly the economic dimension. Reconstruction does not merely entail repairing physical damage; it is also a vital gateway to achieving stability, fostering development, and enhancing the resilience of the population. Accordingly, examining reconstruction processes is an urgent necessity to guide domestic and international efforts toward more effective and sustainable paths.

## Research Design

### *Research Methodology*

The study employs multiple methods consistent with the nature of its subject and objectives:

- **Descriptive-analytical method:** Used to describe and analyze the current economic and social reality in the Gaza Strip and the impacts of the latest Israeli war on Gaza's economy.
- **Comparative method:** Used to examine successful international reconstruction models-such as those of Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Libya, and others-and to derive lessons from them.

### ***Research Population and Sampling***

The research population is represented by the Gaza Strip, as the area that has experienced extensive destruction due to the latest Israeli war. The study focuses on exploring future reconstruction mechanisms in this context, from 7 October 2023 to the present.

### ***Data Collection Tool***

The study relies on secondary data obtained from official websites of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestine Monetary Authority, the World Bank, and reports published by various international institutions.

### **Discussion of Research Findings**

- 1- The latest Israeli war has caused massive destruction of infrastructure, housing, and public services, rendering reconstruction a complex process that requires high-level international and local coordination.
- 2- Despite the availability of some resources and international support, particularly from the Arab Republic of Egypt, internal political division and regional and international polarization continue to hinder reconstruction and prevent tangible progress.
- 3- The absence of a unified national entity to manage reconstruction is one of the key weaknesses in previous efforts, leading to scattered initiatives, conflicting priorities, and diminished donor confidence.
- 4- Lessons from international experiences underscore the importance of leadership and planning. Successful models prioritized gradual implementation, transparency, community participation, and integration between economic and social dimensions.
- 5- There is a need to capitalize on emerging opportunities, particularly renewed regional and global interest and the availability of local expertise that can contribute to planning, building, and implementation.

### **Research Recommendations**

- 1- The Palestinian Authority should establish an independent national reconstruction authority comprising experts from various sectors, enjoying political and popular support, and responsible for designing and implementing reconstruction plans free from political polarization.
- 2- International guarantees for financing and implementation should be secured, including robust oversight and transparency mechanisms, to prevent resource waste and ensure sustainable funding flows.
- 3- Partnerships among the public sector, private sector, and civil society should be strengthened to ensure equitable resource distribution and enhance implementation speed and responsiveness to the population's needs.

- 4- Successful international experiences should be leveraged and adapted to Gaza's local context, especially with regard to governance mechanisms, community participation, and phased reconstruction.
- 5- Reconstruction should prioritize social and humanitarian dimensions-such as health, education, and housing-alongside economic projects, in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable recovery.
- 6- Media and community campaigns should be launched to rebuild trust between citizens and implementing entities and to increase public awareness of the importance of community participation in monitoring and evaluation.
- 7- Reconstruction priorities should be carefully defined, beginning with debris removal, then housing, followed by vital infrastructure, basic services, and ultimately the empowerment of economic sectors.
- 8- Partnership with the Arab Republic of Egypt should be strengthened so that it assumes a pivotal role in leading reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip, given its extensive experience in reconstruction projects and its historic strategic role in the Palestinian cause. The participation of Egyptian companies, known for their expertise and capacity, should be enhanced to speed up reconstruction and promote development in Gaza.
- 9- Reliance on the Arab Republic of Egypt as a primary source for construction and reconstruction materials should be increased, given geographic proximity and integrated logistical infrastructure that can facilitate transport, reduce costs, and accelerate implementation.

## Research Limitations

This study focuses on analyzing selected international post-conflict reconstruction experiences and extracting lessons that could inform future reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip, based on a review of available literature, international reports, and documented practical experiences. Nonetheless, the research has faced several scientific and practical constraints, the most important of which are:

- Reliance on secondary sources, as the study is limited to published literature and international reports due to the difficulty of obtaining field data or conducting direct interviews with experts involved in reconstruction efforts in the case-study countries.
- Variations in the quality and depth of available data: some cases are extensively documented, while others suffer from information gaps or inconsistencies.
- Differences in political, social, and economic conditions between the countries studied and the realities of the Gaza Strip, which complicate the adaptation of lessons learned and their direct application to Gaza's context.

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